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SUBJECT: FRENCH EUROPEAN AFFAIRS SECRETARY SHARES VIEWS ON
EU PRESIDENCY

Classified By: DCM Mark Pekala for reasons 1.4 b and d.

¶1. (C) SUMMARY. On December 4, Ambassador Stapleton and DCM Pekala met with Jean-Pierre Jouyet, State Secretary for European Affairs at the MFA. Jouyet stated his expectation of quick French ratification of the simplified EU treaty and outlined France's priorities of immigration, energy and environment, and security for its upcoming EU Presidency. Jouyet and Amb. Stapleton identified energy/environment and defense as two areas in which close cooperation with the U.S. will be of particular mutual benefit during the French EU Presidency. END SUMMARY.

SIMPLIFIED TREATY TO BE QUICKLY RATIFIED

¶2. (C) Jouyet outlined the schedule for French ratification of the simplified EU treaty, which he envisions taking place in a two-month span. Consistent with earlier public statements (ref Paris Points for November 5), he foresees that the Constitutional Council will recommend the necessary changes to the French Constitution to permit ratification of the new treaty, which will then be reviewed by the Council of Ministers in early January before the package is approved by Parliament in early February. He added that France desires to ratify the treaty quickly, not only for its symbolic value -- highlighting that Europe is on the right track, with France in the driver's seat -- but also so it can move on to focusing on preparations for its upcoming EU Presidency. He noted that a referendum is unnecessary since the draft treaty is not a "constitution" and involves no transfer of sovereignty, as did the Maastricht Treaty.

¶3. (C) Jouyet noted that the Slovenian Presidency in the first half of 2008 will have to devote significant attention to treaty ratification, with special attention given to the more challenging national ratification processes in Great Britain, Ireland, and the Czech Republic. A key task for both 2008 EU Presidencies will be determining how the treaty will be implemented in terms of details and working procedures.

FRENCH EU PRESIDENCY

¶4. (C) OVERVIEW: Jouyet and Amb. Stapleton agreed that France has an ambitious agenda that may serve Europe very well. Jouyet noted that France's Presidency must be decisive and effective in order to have its initiatives adopted by the European Parliament before it breaks to prepare for the European elections in June 2009. Jouyet said that France's good relations with Slovenia and the Czech Republic will help ensure smooth transfers, though dialogue continues with the Czech Republic on the implications of the new treaty. He

noted that France will have over 100 embassies handling external relations for the EU during the Slovenian Presidency.

15. (C) IMMIGRATION: On the first of France's priority areas, Jouyet quoted President Sarkozy in stating that the effort to develop a common approach to migration and immigration among EU member-states will have "no taboos." France will push for an immigration pact with its fellow member-states, capitalizing on the general realization in Europe that questions like regularization, asylum, visas, border crossings, and other "demographic questions" must be addressed. Jouyet said that to ensure progress, France will present concrete proposals. He said France's immigration effort would be helped immeasurably by standardization of the Visa Waiver Program across the EU. DCM Pekala noted that consideration of changes to the Visa Waiver Program is underway, saying that as we work to get additional European countries in, we must also work for better exchanges of information with all participant countries, to ultimately strengthen the program.

16. (C) ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT: Jouyet expressed "energy and environment" as a combined goal, varying from earlier descriptions of two separate goals that happened to dovetail. He said France will focus on fighting global warming by realizing Kyoto and post-Kyoto goals at the European level. The French Presidency will look at energy policy, renewable energy, and burdensharing within Europe and with its major partners, with a sector-by-sector approach to ensure level playing fields among competitors. He stressed the importance that energy policy be comprehensive, including competition as a key issue. France will push questions of how Europe can diversify its energy sources and lessen dependence on Russia and other countries. Jouyet said that France will also present concrete measures in this issue area, with goals like

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encouraging consumption of green products.

17. (C) Nuclear issues: Jouyet stated that France will also open discussion on two nuclear issues: nuclear security and handling of nuclear waste. Nuclear security is especially important among newer EU members in the East, who committed in the accession process to improving their security measures. France will also seek to further European discussion on how to handle nuclear waste, including promotion of R&D. When asked, Jouyet said that newer members of the EU, the UK, and Italy are prepared for matter-of-fact discussions about nuclear energy. He contrasted Germany's lack of readiness for a pragmatic discussion of nuclear energy -- due to its domestic political coalition -- with the current leadership's recognition that such discussion could be in Germany's strategic interests.

18. (C) SECURITY: Jouyet described the French Presidency's third major goal as security writ broadly, including civil aspects such as maritime security and natural disasters, which he noted Europe has no common means to address. Regarding ESDP, he noted that France views a strong European pillar within NATO as in both U.S. and European interests, and thus will pursue a combined ESDP and NATO approach, while avoiding conflict with the UK.

19. (C) EXTERNAL RELATIONS: Jouyet noted that efforts to ensure a constructive partnership with Russia could heavily engage the French Presidency. He also mentioned scheduled summits with India, Korea, Canada, and Africa. Finally, Jouyet noted that France will be pursuing its Mediterranean Union initiative, which he said must be very pragmatic and linked closely to the ongoing Euromed dialogue.

110. (C) OTHER INTERNAL ISSUES: Jouyet noted that France has two additional agenda items already set: the Common Agricultural Policy and the European budget. He said the CAP review is ready to move towards more linkages between producers and production. He noted that prices are generally

good in the agricultural sector, particularly for food products. He said French priorities for the CAP would be more energy efficiency, environmental sensitivity, food security and traceability. Regarding the budget, Jouyet said France will have to lead the effort to determine European budget priorities for 2013 and beyond.

CLOSE COORDINATION WITH U.S. DESIRED

¶11. (C) Jouyet and Amb. Stapleton identified two areas in which the U.S. can be particularly helpful to the French Presidency: energy/environment and defense. France needs to know how much room it has to maneuver on defense efforts, as defined by U.S. views. Jouyet said "France has an open mind towards NATO." Jouyet noted that the Embassy's role will be important, as delivering the right messages at the right moment will be more critical than usual with France acting as the EU Presidency, not just on its own behalf. He noted that if a crisis arises during the Slovenian Presidency, France will step in to support the EU effort, making sharing of U.S. views with France very important. He said that continued close cooperation on external issues like Iran, Iraq, and Afghanistan will also be key.

¶12. (C) In response to questions, Amb. Stapleton said that the next U.S. President will need to work closely with France regarding defense (possible NATO rapprochement, support for ESDP) and the environment, noting that these issues enjoy general consensus in the current presidential campaigns. He said both U.S. and European approaches to world issues are necessary, and that we gain from each other's successes. Jouyet expressed much interest in the U.S. presidential campaigns. Jouyet raised the weak dollar, saying he is confident the exchange rate will be corrected because a strong Euro is not in the interest of U.S. investors or consumers.

¶13. (C) COMMENT. Jouyet has a good sense for what President Sarkozy hopes to accomplish in the EU Presidency, which should help ensure that France's efforts are harmonious and efficient. The French Presidency effort, coordinated from the Prime Minister's Office by Amb. Claude Blanchemaison, is lean but well-organized. We judge Jouyet's candid, pragmatic approach to the U.S.-EU relationship bodes well for constructive interactions throughout the French EU Presidency. END COMMENT.

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